

Notes

CPS Subcommittee VA State Board of Social Services

August 18, 2011

Attendees

Margaret Schultze, JoAnn Wilson-Harfst, Tom Casteel, Al Wilson, Willie Greene, Teri Kiser Williams, Maggi Luca, Betty Wade Coyle, Betty Jo Zarris, Rita Katzman, Robert Spadaccini, Jack Ledden, Karin Clark, Jim Pope, Janine Sewell, Virginia Powell and Emily Gamble.

Minutes

Approved with one correction: spelling of Betty Wade Coyle's name.

Presentation

State Child Fatality Team

Virginia Powell and Emily Gamble spoke to the committee about Virginia's State Child Fatality Review Team. Handouts included Virginia State Child Fatality Review Team Reports dated January 2000, December 2001, and May 2005. The Team's website was provided to access all reports.

Dr. Powell described that the State Child Fatality Review Team doesn't review every case every year. Instead, the Team selects a category of child death that is similar with regard to prevention and intervention, such as caretaker homicides, motor vehicle deaths, etc. For example, the Team has been asked to review child deaths that are agriculture-related.

Over the course of its reviews, the Team has discovered several themes, some of which are directly relevant to child protective services and social services. These include the following:

- The need for ongoing training to child-serving professionals on signs and symptoms of child abuse and their duties as mandated reporters.
- The inability to share records between and among child-serving agencies was identified as a large problem. This is a fundamental problem for children's safety and protection. The Team reviewed several cases where the lack of information to the right agency in a timely manner had a detrimental impact on the welfare of children. The State Team will recommend that the Governor of Virginia make changes to current policy and law to facilitate better and more timely exchanges of information. A copy will be shared with this subcommittee (Fall 2011).
- There is a need for better tools for CPS workers on safety and risk assessments.
- In many cases, removal, foster care and termination of parental rights seemed better solutions than leaving children with caretakers or placement with kin. The Team is concerned about the new federal mandates that prioritize return home and placement with kin.
- The Commonwealth is in desperate need of a better way to deal with families who present with a host of family problems – poverty, mental illness, substance abuse, domestic violence, incarceration, unreliable child care arrangements, unstable housing, etc. Child Protective Services is often mentioned as THE gateway to solving these problems when children are involved, but that is not the right "door" for all of these cases.
- Home visitation programs are effective and evidence-based in supporting fragile children and their families. They should be funded and made available throughout the Commonwealth.

Regional Child Fatality Teams

Rita Katzman provided members a proposed plan to implement regional child fatality review teams in the five regional areas of the State. Implementation date is the first quarter of 2012. Although meetings held at the ME office seem to have better attendance, meetings can be rotated throughout a region. A copy is attached to the official minutes housed in the home office.

Refresher Training for CPS workers

Ms. Katzman spoke of recent training events, confirming 47 training sessions and over 900 CPS workers were trained on new tools. Seventeen sessions have been set for on-call workers. It is expected that refresher training can be adapted from the curriculum used for the recent training.

Draft Charter for CPS Subcommittee

Al Wilson asked that this item be carried over to the next meeting.

Next Steps

- Dr Sood is interested in a satisfaction survey for all parited in the CPS investigation process.
- Discussed having representation from law enforcement on the subcommittee—thought it should be someone locally since meetings will be held in Richmond. Mr. Spadaccini advised he sits on the FBI Board and can arrange for representation if needed.

Future Agenda Items

- Eight hours of training for physicians—discuss Board- to-Board or Commissioner-to -Commissioner?
- MOU for CPS with law enforcement
- Intervention Services for cases that don't meet all 4 markers for a valid case.
- Overturned CPS appeals-concern that cases were overturned on a technicality.

Future Meeting Date

December 15, 2011 1 PM

Meeting adjourned at 3:40 PM